### Smarter Balanced Releases Technology Strategy Framework and System Requirements Specifications

*Report provides IT guidelines for schools implementing next-generation assessments*

**OLYMPIA, Wash**. – The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) today released a technology planning framework for member states preparing to implement the assessment system in the 2014-15 school year. The framework, developed by Navigation North on behalf of the Consortium, provides minimum hardware specifications and basic bandwidth calculations that will allow schools and districts to evaluate which of their existing devices will support the administration of next-generation assessments.

"The Smarter Balanced assessment system leverages technology to give schools and teachers more accurate information about student achievement and progress toward college and career readiness," said Tony Alpert, chief operating officer of Smarter Balanced. "We've collaborated with technology partners, American Institutes for Research, member states, and school districts to design an efficient, computer adaptive, online testing platform that will work in schools."

The framework was developed with input and feedback from Smarter Balanced member states, work groups, and data from the Technology Readiness Tool, an online inventory of technology resources launched earlier this year. Based on the research and data analysis, Smarter Balanced estimates that the majority of schools and districts in member states will be able to successfully administer the assessments with their existing infrastructure. The full Smarter Balanced Technology Strategy Framework and Systems Requirements Specifications report can be accessed at: http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/technology/.

This framework provides two levels of technology specifications: minimum requirements for existing devices and recommended guidelines for new purchases. Students using technology that meets only the minimum specifications may experience periods of slowness during the assessment, while technology consistent with the recommended guidelines will likely result in a more fluid testing experience.

In addition to the hardware and bandwidth requirements, eligible devices must also have a 10" class screen, a mechanical keyboard, headphones, wired or wireless Internet access, and administrative tools to temporarily disable features, functionalities, and applications that could present a security risk during test administration. The technology specifications apply only to the Smarter Balanced assessments and should not be considered minimum specifications to support instruction, which may require additional technology.

| Operating System | Minimum Smarter Balanced Requirements for Current Computers[1,2,3] | Recommended Smarter Balanced Minimum for New Purchases |
|---|---|---|
| Windows | Windows XP (service pack 3) Pentium 233 MHz processor 128 MB RAM 52 MB hard drive free space | Windows 7+ 1 GHz processor 1 GB RAM 80 GB hard drive or at least 1 GB of hard drive space available |
| Mac OS X | Mac OS X 10.4.4 Macintosh computer with Intel x86 or PowerPC G3 (300 MHz) processor, 256 MB RAM, 200 MB hard drive free space | Mac OS X 10.7+ 1 GHz processor 1 GB RAM 80 GB hard drive or at least 1 GB of hard drive space available |
| Linux | Linux (Ubuntu 9-10, Fedora 6) Pentium II or AMD K6-III 233 MHz processor 64 MB RAM 52 MB hard drive free space | Linux (Ubuntu 11.10, Fedora 16) 1 GHz processor 1 GB RAM 80 GB hard drive or at least 1 GB of hard drive space available |
| iOS | iPads 2 and 3 running iOS6 | iPads running iOS6 |
| Android | Android based tablets running Android 4.0+ | Android based tablets running Android 4.0+ |
| Windows | Windows-based tablets running Windows 8+ (excluding Windows RT) | Windows-based tablets running Windows 8+ (excluding Windows RT) |
| Chrome OS | Chromebooks running Chrome OS (v19)+ | Chromebooks running Chrome OS (v19)+ |

[1] The minimum Smarter Balanced requirements are generally equivalent to the minimum requirements of the associated eligible operating system. Users should refer to the minimum requirements of the operating system as a means of resolving any ambiguities in the minimum Smarter Balanced requirements.

[2] These guidelines do not supersede the minimum requirements of the operating systems.

[3] All hardware choices should consider the individual needs of students. Some students may need hardware that exceeds these minimum guidelines, and some students may require qualitatively different hardware. Tablets may require the use of a mouse.

"These technology requirements strike the right balance between the resources in schools today and the innovative assessment system Smarter Balanced is working to develop," said Deborah Sigman, deputy superintendent of public instruction for the California Department of Education and a member of the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee. "The transition to next-generation assessments is too important to create a new digital divide."

Smarter Balanced is developing a balanced system of assessments—with formative, interim, and summative components—that measure achievement and growth toward college and career readiness. The work of Smarter Balanced is guided by the belief that a high-quality assessment system can provide information and tools for teachers and schools to improve instruction and help students succeed—regardless of disability, language, or background.

### 

**About Smarter Balanced**
The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium brings together states to create a common, innovative assessment system for mathematics and English language arts/literacy that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and helps prepare students for college and careers. The Consortium involves educators, researchers, policymakers, and community groups in a transparent and consensus-driven process to help all students thrive in a knowledge-driven global economy. The Consortium's projects are funded through a four-year, $175 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, comprising 99 percent of activity resources, with the remaining support provided through generous contributions of charitable foundations. Membership is open to any interested U.S. state. For more information, please visit www.smarterbalanced.org.